

Ferdinand Louis Amelung to Andrew Jackson, June 4, 1816, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

CAPTAIN FERDINAND AMELUNG TO JACKSON.

New Orleans, June 4, 1816.

Sir: In obedience to your order received on the 6th May last, I proceeded the next day for Panzacola but owing to adverse winds (having to wait 12 days at the Bay St. Louis) I only arrived at that place on the 24th May I was received and treated with great attention by the governor and his officers, and after receiving his answer to your letter I left there on the 27th and arrived here on the 2d Inst:

I have the honor to transmit herewith the answer of the Governor (which I think embraces all the points touched upon in yr. letter) and also take the liberty to subjoin a translation thereof, as it might happen that no person is near you understanding the spanish Language. I am firmly of opinion that the Governor asserts the truth in his communication, and am convinced that the Inhabitants of Panzacola have suffered and do now suffer more than our Citizens from the existence of the Fort and its Garrison. I also take the Liberty of communicating such intelligence as I have been able to collect from good authority and which might perhaps be of some use.

The Fort in question is situated at Bonavista on the Eastern Bank of the Apalachicola River 15 miles above its mouth and 120 miles East of Panza. The River discharges itself into St. George's Sound and vessels drawing not more than 10 feet water may come in between St. George's and St. Vincent's Islands: the Bar however is dangerous and requires a skillfull pilot.

Library of Congress

The fort was constructed by Nichols and Woodbine and the British occasionally resorted thither but on their final evacuation of this country, left it in possession of a Garrison composed of Negroes and Indians with 4 heavy pieces of ordnance and 10,000 wt. of Powder etc. About 20 choctaws, a number of Seminoles and a great number of runaway negroes are supposed to have been there some time ago but a great part of these Brigands have abandoned the Fort on account of scarcity of provisions and have gone to Savannah (alias St. Josephs) River in East Florida,¹ whither they will no doubt all retire in case of an attack by land, as they have a Schooner and several large Boats to make good their retreat, if not intercepted by Sea. From this spot they can easily annoy our Settlements on Flint River and the whole Georgia Frontier, and are in a country, where they can procure subsistence with facility

¹ Apparently the Suwanee is meant. The only river then called St. Joseph, apparently, was one lying much farther south, entering the Gulf at 28° 15' N.

Panzacola itself is, I can assure you, entirely defenceless; the Garrison consists of from 80 to 100 effective men exclusive of a Battalion of color'd troops say abt 150 men, of whom the Inhabitants themselves stand in constant dread. They have about 150 serviceable muskets about 500 musket cartridges and not enough Gunpowder to fire a salute; one gun was mounting at Barancas on the day I left there. To this is to be added the dissatisfaction of the Inhabitants and even of a number of the officers of Government and the desire of the majority to see a change effected. I must not forget to present to you on the part of the Governor the thanks of the inhabitants of Panzacola for the exemplary and humane conduct of the Army under your command while at Panzacola, and I verily believe their professions to be sincere

The Governor also, on my mentioning in conversation that I was persuaded you would willingly assist in destroying the Fort, said that if the object was sufficiently important to require the presence of General Jackson he would be proud to be commanded by you,

Library of Congress

and that if the Captain General of Cuba could not furnish him with the necessary means, he might perhaps apply to you for assistance.

Having nothing further to add I remain Very Respectfully General